

September 28, 2011

RE: Better Buildings Supplemental Instructions on Utility Bill Reporting

Dear Better Buildings Neighborhood Program Grant Recipient:

I am writing to remind you that all Department of Energy (DOE) Better Buildings Neighborhood Program grant recipients are required to collect monthly electricity and natural gas (if applicable) usage histories for all building retrofit projects reported under the grant. As you know, a central goal of the Better Buildings Neighborhood Program is to support and evaluate multiple approaches to accelerate building retrofits. Without these data, that goal is seriously compromised. The collection of energy usage histories will allow DOE to evaluate the efficacy of programs and conduct building science research that will benefit future programs. Authorization to collect this information has been granted by the White House Office of Management and Budget in accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), control number 1910-5150.

Energy usage data should include monthly consumption data by building (or by meter) for usage during at least 12 consecutive months before the retrofit project begins and at least 12 consecutive months after the retrofit project is completed. The energy usage data for each retrofit project should be clearly identified with the unique retrofit project identification number you use for all other quarterly reporting. Personal information (names, addresses, phone numbers, utility meter numbers, or utility account numbers) should not be reported to DOE.

Because of customer privacy obligations, most utilities will not release a customer's energy usage history without a signed waiver from the customer. The steps you must take to obtain one customer's permission, and request and receive their usage history from the utility can be straightforward. However, when you request information for multiple customers over a period of several months, the task can be logistically challenging. If you have not already contacted your local utilities about the steps you need to take to obtain customer energy usage data, we recommend you do so as soon as possible.

Files containing energy usage data can be uploaded to the secure Better Buildings Information System (BBIS) Web Portal, as with all of your reporting documents. Please use the BBIS File Naming Standards Document (available on the Better Buildings Google Site) as a guide for naming energy usage data files uploaded to the BBIS.

Attached is a brief document to help answer questions you may have about collecting energy usage data plus example language for submitting a request. When you request energy usage data from a utility, you may want to share this letter and the attached document to help them understand the context of your request.

If you have any questions about collecting this information, please contact Dale Hoffmeyer at DOE (dale.hoffmeyer@ee.doe.gov; 202-586-8163).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Byrnett", is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danielle Sass Byrnett
Program Manager, Better Buildings Neighborhood Program
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
U.S. Department of Energy